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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000277

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/01/2020

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SPEAKER SAMARRAI'E HOPES FOR QUICK RESOLUTION OF  
DE-BA'ATH DISPUTE BY COURT

REF: BAGHDAD 0200

Classified By: Acting DCM Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Council of Representatives (COR) Speaker Samarra'i'e noted his concern about the delay in resolving the current de-Ba,athification dispute, stressing that current public passions made a political settlement very difficult. On the future of the Presidency Council, Samarra,ie conceded that it was unlikely that the COR would approve an amendment extending the veto power of Presidency Council in the current COR,s term, though he held out hope that such an amendment might occur in the next COR. He reiterated interest in a trip to the United States before the March 7 election to meet with House Speaker Pelosi. ACTION REQUEST in paragraph five.  
End summary.

Accountability and Justice Commission actions  
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¶2. (C) COR Speaker Iyad al-Samarrai'e told A/DCM on January 26 of his concern about delays to the election process caused by the de-Ba'athification controversy. He said the PM, President and he had discussed the matter on January 23, immediately following VP Biden,s meeting with Talabani on that same day. He stated that the PM had stressed that public and political party passions against Ba,athism were too strong to permit a political deal to resolve the matter. Samarra'ie observed that the issue would be best resolved through the legal appeals process. (NOTE: Other details of this meeting related to de-Ba'athification reported reftel. End note.)

Future of Presidency Council  
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¶3. (C) Samarra'i'e noted, with displeasure, that it was unlikely that the COR would approve a constitutional amendment extending the existence of the Presidency Council. Instead, per the constitution, the Presidency Council would cease to exist and become the office of the President in the new government. He said there would also be a single Vice President. He was unsure whether the President would retain veto power over legislature.

¶4. (C) He assessed that with no Presidential veto, there would be no check on the legislative power of the COR until the Federation Council was established or an amendment was passed reestablishing the Presidency Council. He stated there was doubt as to whether the current constitutional amendment process requiring only a majority vote in the COR and approval by 16 of the 18 provinces would still be in effect after the conclusion of this COR term. (Note: After the end of this COR term, the amendment process appears to require a two-thirds majority vote in the COR and approval

by referendum of 16 of the 18 provinces. End note).  
Samarrai'e said he believed the current (easier) amendment  
procedures would continue to be valid.

Visit to U.S. for Speaker Pelosi meeting  
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15. (C) Samarrai'e noted that his planned visit to the  
United States to meet with House of Representative Speaker  
Pelosi had been postponed because of difficulties in  
passing the election law. He reiterated his interest in  
the trip and a meeting with Speaker Pelosi, ideally prior  
to the March 7 parliamentary elections.

ACTION REQUEST: Post requests Department,s guidance on  
Samarraie,s proposed visit to Washington this month and  
meeting  
with Speaker Pelosi.  
HILL